Congress Position

Reg. No. B3092

HARIJAN

16 Pages

Editor : PYARELAL

VOL. XII. No. 1 AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1948 TWO ANNAS

HARIJANS AND TEMPLE ENTRY

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

A friend from Wadhwan writes:

> "You must be receiving reports about the entry of the Harijans into temples. These days Harijans are taken into temples anyhow — with or against the consent of the trustees. One can understand the insistence on getting Harijans admitted to Vaishnavite *havelis* or Ramji *mandirs*, but one fails to understand what good it can serve to take them into Swami Narayan or Jain temples in which they do not believe. Or, is it supposed that they will develop faith in them, the moment they are admitted there?"

The other letter is from Ahmedabad. It is unsigned and carries only a *nom de plume*: 'Your oppressed ones'. From the handwriting and the language it is clear that it has not emanated from the pen of the Harijans I know. Its relevant portion is as follows:

> "On the festival of *Makar Sankranti* on the 14th, Harijans tried to visit temples. When they reached the Swami Narayan Mandir at 8 a.m. with the *bhajan mandalis* they found the doors shut and fastened with *khambhati* locks. They are squatting there still making *satyagraha*. They refuse to go to work. The local Congress Committee has condemned their action. How strange! If they do not come into their rights even after the attainment of independence when will they at all? Local Congressmen go there and return after a few minutes' stay — there is no serious effort, no effective help and the poor Harijans are left to drown their discomfiture by bawling out devotional songs in the bitter cold. Who will end this impasse? There is no man with personality or character among the Congressmen here. In Dakor Shri Ravishankar Maharaj used his influence to get the Harijans admitted into the temple there. But there is nobody to get them admittance to temples here. Are the Harijans for ever to be baulked of their inherent right? Only your intervention can save the situation. Today for the third day thousands of Harijan *satyagrahis* are squatting in front of the temple gates exposed to the inclemencies of the weather. They do not want to go to law. Nor is there a likelihood of the hearts of the so-called *savarnas* melting. What will be the end? Would you, please, show the way out?"

The distinction drawn by the writer of the first letter, in my opinion, has no meaning. The Harijans are entitled to and do actually visit Swami Narayan and Jain temples and they should be allowed to do so. For years there has been a movement to secure for the Harijans equal temple entry rights with the *brahmanas* and it has met with considerable success. Now that the Bombay Government have passed a law to that effect, there seems to be no occasion left for *satyagraha*. If the law reflects popular opinion it ought to command spontaneous acceptance and respect. If, on the other hand, it is in the teeth of popular opinion, its enforcement will be retarded. In democracy a law cannot be given effect to by force. It calls for discerning circumspection. It will succeed in its object if the reformer makes an intelligent and discriminating use of it. Hurry or impatience will defeat its object.

Trustees are not owners of temples. Even owners cease to have property rights over temples when they are meant for public use. True owners of the temples are the votaries who go there to worship. Regarded in this light, all Jain and Swami Narayan temples are Hindu shrines. I have myself visited these temples. No one ever cared to inquire as to what my sect was. It was enough that I looked like a Hindu. The same holds good of hundreds of other visitors like myself. Therefore, the Harijans must be free to visit all temples that are open to the Hindus. Today, awakened public opinion and the law which embodies that opinion do not regard Harijans as a separate caste, but an integral part of the four or the eighteen *varnas* comprising Hindu society. Therefore, the contrary view cannot prevail. It is the devotee's devotion that makes a temple a living shrine. The deity in the temple is only a reflection of the devotee's spirit.

To come to the second letter — in spite of my clear view being as stated above, I fail to appreciate the importunity of the Harijans. The squatters are not true devotees. They do not care for *dev-darshan*; they are running only after their right, and to that extent they are running away from true religion. To write letters anonymously or get others to write them for you is not the mark of a devotee. A true devotee will follow in the footsteps of Nandanar who disdained help of anybody but God. Today he commands the homage even of the *brahman* who regards himself as 'high caste'. I look forward to the birth of a Nandanar, among those who have become Harijans by adoption. And I know that must be the wish of the Harijans by birth too. If non-Harijan Hindu society wants, let them take Harijan to their

temples and shrines with due regard and respect. If not, and pending that consummation, let the Harijans stay in their homes and sanctify them by the purifying Ganga of their devotion. They don't have need to squat or sit *dharna* before any temple. In my opinion such *dharna* carries no merit — it is irreligious, sinful and fit only to be eschewed.

New Delhi, 27-1-'48

(*From the original in Gujarati*)

SACRED MOMENTS

I

The saddest spectacle that met one on our arrival in Noakhali was that of women with their bare wrists and foreheads without the auspicious red mark. Their conch bangles had been broken and the auspicious marks forcibly removed by the rioters at the time of their so-called conversion. In some cases they had themselves removed them out of fear. Their faces were joyless and faded and in their eyes was the hunted animal look which went to one's heart. As a rule they seldom spoke to you in the open but took you into the privacy of their inner apartments before they dared to open their lips and pour out their tale of woe. From this life-in-death existence they were resurrected by the magic of *Ramanama*. I had nothing else to give them.

I shall never forget the experience when for the first time I assembled a group of them in a devastated *badi* in Shahpur and made them recite *Ramanama*. They were all poor folk — the poorest of the poor — *dhobis* and *malis* and *chowkidars*. Their masters had fled leaving them to look after their *badis*. A small group of children had run inside their house at the sight of strangers on our approach. "Till a short time ago," their parents told us, "we all used to wear Muslim dress." A Maulvi used to come daily to teach them *namaz*. They lived under a pall of fear.

"We have no earthly helpers; we are helpless," they told us.

"Do you ever take *Ramanama*?" I asked them.

"We dare not."

"Even in your homes?"

"Yes, even in our homes. You do not know what we have passed through."

"Then begin doing it from today — now, with me."

They agreed. As their singing gathered volume, they became altogether oblivious of their surroundings. A new light spread over their countenance. They had found the "Help of the helpless".

The next step was to gather all of them from two villages in one place and hold a *Harikirtan* jointly. It proved to be a great success and for the first time since the riots, the blast of a conch shell was heard in Shahpur Bazar. It had a strange sequel. But I must leave that for the present.

Rehabilitation had commenced late in the village of Karatkhil. To commemorate it an 'inter-caste' dinner was held in April last. A procession of Muslims from Shahpur Bazar that happened to pass over the District Board road just then, shouting slogans of *Allah-o-Akbar*, had the effect of throwing the whole gathering into a commotion. Someone from among the processionists had entered into a *mali's badi* — so ran the report — and beaten the *mali's* little boy who happened to be alone there. The culprit could not be traced. I followed up the processionists to Somepara Bazar. With several of them I had made friends, and found that they meant no trouble. When I returned, the dinner was still in progress. I asked the gathering to indicate by raising their hands as to how many of them had not been unnerved by the shouting and the rest. In reply five hands from among men and three only from among women went up.

The next morning after a sleepless night, I began to make them recite *Ramanama* together. At first I used to gather together in one place members of each *badi* and explain to them the inner meaning and significance of the Name. Afterwards they began to assemble from all the *badis* in front of their devastated *Thakurghar*. The gist of what I told them in scores of heart-to-heart talks was that if they had a living faith in God and walked in His fear always, they would know no other fear. Fear of death turned men into cowards and yet was there a man who being born could escape death? On the reverse, was there any to whom death could come twice? Which was better then — to face the miscreant's dagger like a man while defending one's honour and religion or to purchase a brief, cowardly reprieve only to die of sickness, old age or disease after prolonged agony and suffering? If they really regarded God as Father, why should they be afraid at the prospect of meeting Him in answer to His call? Did they not believe that not a sparrow falls without His will? And to illustrate the remark, I told them the story which the late Maulana Shaukat Ali used so often to relate of a condemned prisoner in the Yeravda Prison, who, all through the night previous to his execution for wife-murder, danced and sang in his cell, the song:

'कर ले सिंगार चतुर अलबेली
साजनके घर जाना होगा ।'

"Bedeck thyself, O! gay, elegant youth, prepare thyself for the journey to thy beloved's place."

If they really believed that God was their friend and protector, they would rejoice to meet Him. Such living faith would make the weakest of them more than a match for physically the strongest. Arms would have no terrifying effect upon them since arms could not further accentuate death. Supposing, I put it to them, a horde of hooligans, armed with *lathis* and daggers, came upon them while they were engaged in singing *Ramadhun*, and the women and children instead of collapsing or running helter-skelter at their sight, remained absorbed in their singing, altogether oblivious of their presence, the hooligans would be non-plussed. They would feel that those unarmed women and children had something in them which they (the hooligans) lacked — a power that was superior to

that of arms and which enabled them to remain undismayed even in the face of death. The condition was that the latter should neither tremble, nor turn pale, nor harbour resentment or ill-will in their hearts. Woman was looked upon, and she regarded herself, as the " weaker vessel". That was perhaps true when the contest was of arms, but since the inauguration of the *satyagraha* era, the situation had been reversed. In *satyagraha* not only could women take an equal part in the struggle with men, they could lead. They had an infinite capacity for patient suffering. In their homes they had wielded, unconsciously perhaps, the weapon of *satyagraha* since the beginning of time. Men might delude themselves with the belief that they could defend themselves by the strength of their right arm. True, in practice they had seen its futility, but women had nothing else to rely upon except God and the power of *satyagraha*. "*Ramanama*, therefore, must mean everything to you, if it comes not merely from your lips only, but from your heart so that it becomes a living presence with you and shows in the littlest of your little acts. I promise, that in future it will not be you who will tremble before the *goonda*, it is the latter who will tremble before you."

The last words came out from the depths without any premeditation and in spite of myself almost. I confess, if I had time to reflect and ratiocinate, I might have trembled before giving these words utterance.

It was no easy task in the beginning to persuade the women to come out of their seclusion and stand erect in regular rows, facing men and sing in a loud voice, free from embarrassment, *Ramadhun* to the accompaniment of *tal*. But gradually they got used to it. At first men used to lead and the women followed. But after some time the arrangement was reversed. They led and the men followed.

The routine which we followed was to have *Ramadhunkirtan* in our *badi* in Bhatialpur early in the morning to the sounding of the gong (*kansa*). The signal was picked up by the adjoining village where a small party of us proceeded next, singing *Ramadhun* to the accompaniment of *tal* all the way. As soon as we reached there the gong would be beaten there and that served as a signal for the third village, which we visited next, with more members added to our party. The return journey was utilized to teach the little boys and girls some songs and *mantras*, which later formed part of their regular prayer at all functions. After *Ramadhunkirtan* they all dispersed and engaged in scavenging and sanitation work in their respective *badis*, which was an essential part of our programme. I, with my doctor colleague, would then visit the sick and ailing patients. Incidentally, this enabled us to teach the boys and girls accompanying us a little nursing, care of the sick and elementary rules of health. In the afternoon we all assembled in one place and had an hour's *takli upasana* in perfect silence.

New Delhi, 12-1-'48 PYARELAL

(To be concluded)

LESSONS FROM RUSSIA

Speaking on a cut motion in the Legislative Assembly recently Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, in the course of his speech defending the obtaining of furniture from Stockholm for the Embassy at Moscow said:

> " It just is not possible to furnish in Moscow. You get an empty house. We thought of sending things from India but it was almost physically impossible unless we spend vast sums over aeroplanes carrying chairs and tables from here! Of course, it could be furnished alternatively with Russian furniture. The Russian people, and all credit to them for this, ever since this war, are so intent on doing what they consider to be the fundamental things that they refuse to waste their time on accessories of life. They have to build up their country after the most horrible sufferings and damage they suffered in the war and they are building it up in regard to the major undertakings. They go about in torn clothes and broken down shoes, it does not matter, but they are building dams, reservoirs and factories and the rest which they consider more important. So it is not easy to get any of these small accessories of life for the moment. The result is our Embassy in Moscow had to go to Stockholm for its tables and chairs."

Russia made tremendous sacrifices after the 1917 revolution and built up an economy which was the admiration and wonder of certain types of economic thinkers. After thirty years of forced-pace planning and repeated stepping up of their production plans we find Russia is not able to supply even tables and chairs and they have to be content with "torn clothes and broken down shoes"! Why? This is a lesson for India to sit down and think before she takes to the same line of action.

Russia built enormous "dams, reservoirs and factories" after the first world war at a feverish rate and at a stupendous human cost. Where are they now? Once again they are building "dams, reservoirs and factories". How long are they going to last? Will history repeat itself in another twenty years? The people are now said to be again "going about in torn and broken down shoes". What has been the benefit to the common man of all the sacrifices that have been made? How has the world been benefited? May India draw its lessons.

May we take a lesson from the Russians that they are " intent on doing fundamental things ? " In India we have not even "clothes" to be "torn" nor "shoes" to be "broken down". Our fundamental thing is food for the very existence. Under these circumstances, whether India obtains "tables and chairs from Stockholm" or not is not the thing that will affect the people of the land. One would imagine obtaining food is a greater "fundamental need", but the planning that the Government of India does today ignores this very need and is directing its attention to the frills of life which the Embassies are to the imperialist nations. They are not even "small accessories" to an agricultural country like ours.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

HARIJAN

February 1 1948

CONGRESS POSITION

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Indian National Congress which is the oldest national political organization and which has after many battles fought her non-violent way to freedom cannot be allowed to die. It can only die with the nation. A living organism ever grows or it dies. The Congress has won political freedom, but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom. These freedoms are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not spectacular. All-embracing constructive work evokes the energy of all the units of the millions.

The Congress has got the preliminary and necessary part of her freedom. The hardest has yet to come. In its difficult ascent to democracy, it has inevitably created rotten boroughs leading to corruption and creation of institutions, popular and democratic only in name. How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth?

The Congress *must* do away with its special register of members, at no time exceeding one crore, not even then easily identifiable. It had an unknown register of millions who could never be wanted. Its register should now be co-extensive with all the men and women on the voters' rolls in the country. The Congress business should be to see that no faked name gets in and no legitimate name is left out. On its own register it will have a body of servants of the nation who would be workers doing the work allotted to them from time to time.

Unfortunately for the country they will be drawn chiefly for the time being from the city dwellers, most of whom would be required to work for and in the villages of India. The ranks must be filled in increasing numbers from villagers.

These servants will be expected to operate upon and serve the voters registered according to law, in their own surroundings. Many persons and parties will woo them. The very best will win. Thus and in no other way can the Congress regain its fast ebbing unique position in the country. But yesterday the Congress was unwittingly the servant of the Nation, it was *khudai khidmatgar* — God's servant. Let it now proclaim to itself and the world that it is only God's servant — nothing more, nothing less. If it engages in the ungainly skirmish for power, it will find one fine morning that it is no more. Thank God, it is now no longer in sole possession of the field.

I have only opened to view the distant scene. If I have the time and health, I hope to discuss in these columns what the servants of the Nation can *do* to raise themselves in the estimation of their masters, the whole of the adult population, male and female. New Delhi, 27-1-'48

MILL CLOTH V. KHADI

How easy it is to produce enough cloth will be seen from the result of a little experiment conducted through the basic school at Gandhi Camp, Kazirkhil in Noakhali. Spinning as a basic craft was introduced in the month of July 1947. In the first month 13 spinners working 10 wheels produced 67,000 yards of yarn weighing 4 seers and 1 *chhatak*. The equivalent in *khadi* is nearly 26 square yards of *khadi*. The highest average speed attained by a spinner was 186 yards of yarn per half hour, the highest out-turn being 12,500 yards or 12·5 *chhataks* of yarn. During the month of October, the out-turn of 19 boys and girls was 1,06,500 yards. The corresponding figure for December was 1,46,788 yards of yarn, giving an average of 12,200 yards or 4 square yards of *khadi* per head — the number of spinners being 12. One of them was a girl. The speed for half an hour averaged from 122 yards to 298 yards. Here are a few samples of speed attained by children of various ages:

Age	Speed per half hour
6 to 6½ years	122 yards
10 years	295 yards
17 years	298 yards

The total output of the youngest spinner for the month was 2,135 yards of yarn, that of the eldest 19,642 yards, the girl span 15,799 yards.

Every one of the children attending the school today is dressed in immaculately white *khadi* uniform of his or her own spinning.

In Ramadevpur, where Shri Kanu Gandhi is working, almost every woman spinner has got one *sari* woven out of self-spun yarn. Equally eloquent are figures from other centres where spinning has been organized on self-sufficiency basis:

Centre	Number of Spinners	Out-turn for November
Nandapur	32	*Dhotis* 6, *Saris* 15, *Chaddars* 31 and long cloth 15 pieces.
Kethuri	95	*Dhotis* 17, *Saris* 9 and long cloth 15 pieces.
Shirondi	76	*Lungis* 14, *Jamas* 13, *Saris* 20, *Dhotis* 22 and long cloth 21 yards.
Chandipur	137	*Saris* 18, *Chaddars* 2 and *Dhotis* 6.
Parakot	88	*Chaddars* 14, *Saris* 17, *Dhotis* 2 and long cloth 10 pieces.

And this in a place where people used to wait for one precarious piece of mill *sari* or *lungi* month after month.

New Delhi, 20-1-'48 PYARELAL

ECONOMICS OF KHADDAR
(Revised Second Edition)
By
Richard B. Gregg
Price *Rs. Two* Postage *etc. As. Seven*
NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

WORTHY OF REFLECTION

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

A young man writes:

"Today at noon I learnt that you had commenced fasting. I resisted the temptation of writing to you during the fast. But I can do so no longer.

"1. It is idle to think that a fast of five or seven days on your part can establish heart unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans. All it can achieve will be a sort of unity on the surface that manifests itself in mammoth public meetings, processions and such demonstrations. And that is good so far as it goes. But it won't be a sign of a real heart unity. You should not, therefore, delude yourself into the belief at the end of your fast that heart unity has been established. I do not regard the peace in Calcutta either as betokening heart unity. What your fast will do will be to make the Hindus suppress their anger so as not to kill innocent Mussalmans. And I think it should be enough to induce you to end your fast.

"2. By your penance you have gained a unique place in the hearts and affection of the people. On the other hand, our people have not yet attained a living faith in the immortality of the soul, which can enable them to regard physical death with philosophical indifference. They are not prepared to allow your life to ebb away by inches before their very eyes. They will, therefore, suppress their anger and hatred in order to save your life. But this pent-up anger is sure to burst out at the first opportunity. It seems to me that some such consideration alone must have led you to suggest that even civil war was to be preferred to partition.

"3. If anger and hatred are to be purged out of the hearts of the people, the Government ought to teach them to base their lives on constructive work. But today we see in the Papers that shortly 600 imported tractors and 6000 or more tons of fertilizers, i. e. ammonium sulphate are going to be unloaded on our shores. One can understand people wanting industrialization of key industries to build up the country's war potential, but I fail to understand why they should want to centralize the production of the prime necessaries of life, viz. food and clothing. In America, they are tending more and more to revert to natural manures. We seem to be going in for the production of chemical fertilizers.

"4. I can say from my experience that the Indian Muslims are not so innocent as they might appear. Let not the tales of woe which the Delhi Muslims pour into your ears mislead you into thinking that all the Muslims in India or a greater part are innocent sufferers. On the contrary, a large majority of them are simply biding their time and waiting for an opportunity to play the fifth columnists when Pakistan would invade India. I do not impute these motives to the multitude of ignorant Muslim masses in the villages, but I do believe that they can serve as fuel to the fire. It seems to me that at the back of the Pakistan arrogance and truculence is the feeling that Indian Muslims are with them, and that they can and will exploit you to the full. They also reckon upon getting the support of some other selfishly inclined powers.

"5. In view of the foregoing, I feel that your fast was not meant to achieve anything more than making the Hindus restrain their passions.

"6. I hold that the Hindu-Muslim trouble can be resolved only in two ways. First, by the Hindus completely cleansing their hearts. That expectation may be said to have been belied long ago. As you have observed, the Congress struggle has so far been based on the passive resistance of the weak. Therefore, now that power has come to it, it will rush towards *himsa* with redoubled speed. A glance at the record of the various provincial Governments will amply bear out this. The other way is for the Indian Government to handle the situation with firmness. This, it seems to me, it has failed to do so far and to that extent — thanks to your influence — the interest of the country has suffered."

The foregoing letter deserves careful attention. Contrary to what the correspondent holds, instances can be adduced of instantaneous change of heart. It would have been more apt to say that such heart change is transitory. Now that my fast is over, it remains to be seen what result it produces. I say this not to deprecate or detract from what the writer of the foregoing letter has said. The Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs — all may learn something from it. The ideal of communal unity is not a new one. It has always been before the country as one of the pillars of national independence. Without it independence cannot last. This has been regarded as more or less axiomatic. The transition period, which I hope, is now over, reflected our distemper. We may, therefore, expect that the unity that has been established in Delhi will prove enduring.

That the edifice of unity can rest on constructive work alone is a maxim which everybody should remember. The question is how to realize it. It is up to every worker who believes in it to live it in his life and to bring it home to his neighbours. By going into explaining the scientific basis of the constructive programme, it can be made interesting. Our daily experience shows that this programme cannot be advanced by mechanical or unintelligent work.

That tractors and chemical fertilizers will spell our ruin, I have not a shadow of a doubt.

I do not regard all the Mussalmans of India to be innocent. What is obvious is that after the birth of Pakistan the Muslims in the Indian Union have been placed in a very difficult situation and it is up to the majority community to mete out exact justice to them. It would spell the ruin of both Hindu religion and the majority community, if the latter, in the intoxication of power entertains the belief that it can crush the minority community and establish a purely Hindu Raj. I consider the

present occasion to be particularly auspicious for purging out the dross from the hearts of both the communities by a strenuous effort at self-purification.

The meaning of the fifth paragraph is not quite clear. In any case, my fast being for the purification of all I expected and still expect all — be they Hindu, Muslim or others — to turn the searchlight inward and to cast out all hidden impurity.

In the sixth paragraph I find only dry logic. It ignores the heart. No one has a right to say that what could not be achieved during the struggle for independence is unachievable at all times. On the contrary, today there is a real opportunity to demonstrate the supremacy of *ahimsa*. True, our people have been sucked into the whirlpool of universal militarization. If even a few can keep out of it, it will be their privilege to set an example of *ahimsa* of the brave and be reckoned as the first servants of India. This cannot be demonstrated by intellect. Therefore, till it can be realized through experience, it must be accepted in faith.

The Swaraj Government is bound to proceed with firmness and courage. A Government which is weak or which allows itself to be led into courses which its reason does not approve of, is not fit to rule. It ought to step aside and make way for a better one. To say or to believe that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel have weakened under my influence is to betray gross ignorance of their character. And if my influence has really the enervating effect imputed to it by my correspondent, it is a thing for me to be ashamed of and for the country to deplore as detrimental to its very existence.

New Delhi, 23-1-'48

(*From the original in Gujarati*)

THE SEVEN POINT PLEDGE

[Below is the text of the declaration made by the Peace Committee of Delhi before it could persuade Gandhiji to break his fast. — ED.]

We wish to announce that it is our heart-felt desire that the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and members of other communities should once again live in Delhi like brothers and in perfect amity and we take the pledge that we shall protect the life, property and faith of Muslims and that the incidents which have taken place in Delhi will not happen again.

We want to assure Gandhiji that the annual fair at Khwaja Qutab-ud-Din Mazar will be held this year as in previous years.

Muslims will be able to move about in Subzimandi, Karol Bagh, Paharganj and other localities just as they could in the past.

The mosques which have been left by Muslims and which now are in the possession of Hindus and Sikhs will be returned. The areas which have been set apart for Muslims will not be forcibly occupied.

We shall not object to the return to Delhi of the Muslims who have migrated from here if they choose to come back and Muslims shall be able to carry on their business as before.

We assure that all these things will be done by our personal efforts and not with the help of the police or military.

We request Mahatmaji to believe us and to give up his fast and continue to lead us as he has done hitherto.

REORIENTATION IN RAILWAYS

Most of the Indian Railways have been nationalized. The expectations of the major travelling public have greatly risen. A classless railway service stands as the ultimate ideal. Such an achievement will of course serve as tenderfoot training to the ordinary citizen if in due course the establishment of a genuine socialistic State in our country is seriously proposed by those at the helm of affairs. At least while travelling the rich and the poor would have the same standard of life.

A complete overhaul for making the third class journey more comfortable may involve some delay especially for constructing improved types of bogies etc. But levelling down can be immediately taken up without running extra cost. On the other hand, it will result in some saving which can be used for urgent needs. There can be two opinions on the immediate closure of the first and second class for obvious reasons. But there are quite a number of other facilities monopolized by the upper classes other than the luxurious bogies. Third class passengers are simply treated like untouchables.

There are separate booking offices maintained for the higher classes. As a matter of fact the number of higher class travellers is comparatively small. They can as well book their tickets at the third class booking offices. Thus, eliminating the minor stations where the booking offices are common for all classes, if there are about 2000 major railway stations on our railways, about 2000 booking clerks can be diverted to provide better facilities to the general passenger public (third class). The vacant counters of the upper class booking offices are an eyesore to the third class passenger, whose ordeal in getting a ticket is too well-known to need description.

Then there are the exclusive entrance and exit doors maintained for the upper class passenger. This involves unnecessary additional cost of maintaining another 2000 ticket collectors, who can be relieved and used at the common exits and entrances.

Even lavatories are maintained at every major railway station exclusively for the upper class entailing cost of special staff which can be usefully diverted to better the appalling condition of the ordinary lavatories.

Special waiting rooms and dining halls are also run at railway junctions and major stations. The hell-like condition of the ill-attended third class waiting rooms is notorious enough. Then why not have a clean and simple comfortable waiting place for all passengers alike ?

Interim Reforms

Besides the above mentioned measures the following steps should be taken for the immediate relief of the third class passengers :

1. *Sanitation — Station premises*: Instead of having third class waiting rooms, in most cases, as open halls like cowsheds affording no protection from wind or cold or dust, and even rain in some cases, proper enclosures should be put up affording sufficient shelter.

Basins for spitting be provided in adequate numbers.

2. *Water Supply*: The existing water supply arrangement is quite unsatisfactory. Even at important junctions there are only two or three taps. The passengers have to struggle to get even a jug filled with water. The person detailed for serving water at train times cannot cope with the demand.

In a tropical country like India travellers ought to get ample fresh water. More taps, about half a dozen, can be attached to the same pipe end. The washing place where the taps are located deserves reform. As water gushes out with extra force the whole place is made dirty and much water is wasted. On the other hand if more spouts are attached to the same pipe, many people can avail of the water supply at the same time and with comfort. The masonry construction beneath the taps, the height, size and contrivance of the taps, all vary from place to place. Would it not be advisable to have a standard pattern, most convenient for all stations alike?

It is high time that we have drinking water supply in moving trains.

3. *Latrines* in third class bogies have at present, no lights and this adds to the insanitary state of these latrines. In some cases the water pipes in the latrines are out of order and in most cases, there is no water. Until proper care is taken to rectify the present state of affair in third class latrines, they cannot be considered fit to serve an honourable citizen in a free India. Old bogies have a repulsive appearance. They should be repainted.

4 *Food Supply :* The quality of the eatables supplied is much inferior. This is perhaps due to the existing contract system. Contractors are given a monopoly to engage vendors over almost a whole railway line. This monopoly contract should be replaced by issuing direct licences to local vendors. Stipulated lists of food stuffs have to be reformed on the basis of the purchasing capacity of the majority of travellers; nutritive values, and climatic conditions must be considered. Cheap fruit juices like sugarcane juice and palm *nira* and *sharbat* prepared from *gur* should be made available in lieu of costly aerated waters. Cheaper *chapatis* and millet *rotis* be made universally available instead of the unhygienic *pudis*. The South Indian Railways food provision is commendable. Rice mixed with curds well-wrapped in clean leaves is sold besides other cheap local preparations at every important station. At major junctions full-fledged Indian meals (stomach-full) are provided at nominal rates. Why should not there be the same arrangement in other railway lines too? In general, the whole catering should be for the benefit of the passengers and not to enable a few to amass wealth.

5. *A Meaningless Luxury :* The inter, second and first class ladies' compartments are superfluous. Generally, educated ladies alone resort to the higher classes While they do not prefer segregation in other walks of life, will it not be agreeable to them to be seated in the same compartments as males, if necessary with reserved seats, just as the buses have? So long as class distinctions are tolerated, one special upper class may be provided for ladies. In practice generally, ladies accompany their male relatives. The ladies' compartments run empty. So also is the case of ladies' waiting rooms. As a matter of fact, there is fear and loneliness for ladies travelling in segregation. Thus, an intelligent husbanding of the space available in trains can relieve the suffocating third class passenger to a great extent.

6. *Sanitary Service :* Exclusive and prompt service is provided for cleaning the upper class compartments. But the third class carriages are neglected. The latrines are filthy in most trains and the floor is rarely swept at junctions. The passengers' co-operation counts much. But as the railways focus their attention on the sanitation of the upper class bogies, the third class compartments should also get the same treatment and attention. For effective work in this respect, honorary services of sanitary visitors and inspectors can be enlisted from public-spirited social workers without incurring extra cost. Active co-operation of the passengers can be had by providing brooms etc. in the carriages.

7. *Long journeys involving night travel: Third Class*: Special passes should be issued authorizing such travellers the use of special bogies with sleeping accommodation exclusively reserved for them. A railway servant must be posted in the bogie to assist the passengers.

8. *Short Journey Travel:* For every carriage the old rules providing a limited sitting accommodation can be temporarily amended by prescribing some additional number. The number given, which is the maximum that can be reasonably accommodated, must in no circumstances be exceeded. This must not be left to the discretion of the passengers. For ensuring the observance of this rule and also for eradicating the habit of ticketless travel, it will be much helpful to post in each carriage a conductor. He shall have to look after the comfort of the travellers and safeguarding the interests of the railway. He should be invested with all powers of the present ticket examiner and the railway police, except issuing tickets or receiving any payment on behalf of the railway. The cadre of the present ticket examiners and the provision of issuing extension and other tickets in moving trains ought to be abolished for effectively eliminating ticketless travel.

Maganvadi,
Wardha, 13-1-'48 GAJANAN NAIK

NOTES

Decontrol Vindicated

Contrary to the warnings of the prophets of evil that decontrol of food stuffs would send prices of food stuffs rocketting up, bringing untold hardships to the poor consumer, events are more and more vindicating the wisdom of the step and today even some of its erstwhile critics have become its warm supporters. A correspondent from Ahmedabad, while noting the remarkable change that has come over the general atmosphere as a result, sends the following comparative figures of various food stuffs before and after the lifting of the controls, showing further decline over figures published previously:

Food stuff	Black market price per maund Rs. As. Ps.	Current price per maund Rs. As. Ps.
Bajri	12 0 0	8 0 0
Paddy	12 0 0	8 0 0
Wheat	25 0 0	15 0 0
Jowar	12 0 0	8 0 0
Sugar	60 0 0	25 0 0
Molasses	24 0 0	16 0 0
Oil	40 0 0	25 0 0
Tuar	20 0 0	10 0 0
Gawar	9 0 0	6 0 0
Mung	20 0 0	8 0 0
Math	15 0 0	7 0 0
Ghee	100 0 0	80 0 0

Wheat crop for the current year, the correspondent goes on to add, has been satisfactory. Unless, therefore, some unforeseen calamity overtakes us, the price of wheat after a couple of months would further drop down to Rs. 10 per maund and *bajri* to Rs. 7 per maund.

After Food Stuffs Cloth

The correspondent then proceeds:

"One fails to understand why the control on the price of textiles is still not lifted. I am certain that if it were removed, within two months the price of cloth too would come down. I am afraid that if control on the price of cloth is not removed it will, in the long run, have an adverse effect on the prices of food stuffs too. On the other hand, its removal will tend to bring down the prices of food stuffs still further."

In fact the case for lifting of the control on the prices of cloth is even stronger than that in respect of food stuffs. The consumer cannot grow more food stuffs at will. But every man, woman and child given the necessary technical training and raw materials — of which there is no dearth — can easily produce the cloth he or she requires, if only they have the will. That by itself would provide an effective check on unscrupulous profiteering.

P.

[Happily cloth control has now been practically lifted. New Delhi, 18-1-'48 — M. K. G.]

The New Family Member

Readers of the *Harijan* will have seen the things that Gandhiji has been saying regarding Compost Manure, and how he has received it into the Family of Constructive Activities.

I am writing these lines to ask the old members to receive the new family member kindly, as being worthy of consideration.

Compost will be helpful to *Khadi*, for it will grow better cotton.

Compost will be helpful to Education, for it will teach sanitation, thrift and the science of soils.

Compost will be helpful to the Harijans, for it will provide a good living to the lowliest.

Compost will be helpful to Hindu-Muslim unity, for it will bring us into useful touch with the peasants of both the communities.

And lastly, Compost will be helpful to all, for it will lead us from want to plenty.

All those in Constructive Work who feel interested, may kindly communicate with me, so that we may discuss and decide how best to co-ordinate the Compost Campaign with the rest of Gandhiji's Constructive Programme.

12-1-'48 MIRA

P. O. Rishikesh,
Dist. Dehra-Dun (U. P.)

A Suggestion

A rural worker, who has been experimenting in agriculture, makes the following suggestion for the better utilization of manures. The suggestion is that instead of spreading the manure broadcast, if the manure is drilled along certain lines on which again the seeds are drilled, then the quantity of manure that is used per field will be much better utilized because all the manural properties will be concentrated close to the roots of the plants and plants grown in this fashion yield considerably more. In our country as the manure problem is very acute, every means of husbanding the resources and putting them to the best possible use should claim our attention and, therefore, we are passing on this suggestion for what it is worth.

Sport

Lord Wavel, the last Viceroy, who is at present the Chancellor of Aberdeen University stated in regard to Cricket that

"It is a game involving prodigality of time and effort out of proportion to its importance and it seems the height of absurdity that English boys and men should spend several days at a stretch on it and go on doing this for months together."

We presume Lord Wavel knows what he is talking about. If these sports are wasteful of money and time in Great Britain, one of the richest countries of the world, what shall we say of the poor India sending out teams to show their achievements in other parts of the world? It seems to us that a time has come for us to rethink and consider many of the ways that had been introduced by our

erstwhile rulers, which we have taken for granted as the acme of civilization. Even newsprint, which is scarce today, is being used liberally where sports news is concerned. At least one page a day in most of the important newspapers is devoted to such pastimes as Cricket, Racing, Cinemas, Gambling, etc. We have to build up anew our requirements in amusements.

Is It Too Late ?

It has been stated that the fertilizer factory to be situated in Sindri (Behar) will be built up soon. The erection works are to begin early this year. Seeing that the question of using artificial fertilizers without widespread organization for careful soil analysis may prove a danger to the maintenance of the fertility of the soil, as has already been demonstrated in the experiments in Gujarat, is it wise to go ahead with this ill-conceived project? It may be best at the present time to retrace our steps and utilize such materials as have been ordered in the many irrigation projects and other undertakings that the Government of India may plan for the better cultivation of food crops. Instead of sinking twenty crores in an undertaking of doubtful benefit it would appear wisest, even at some loss, to change our mind now and proceed with schemes that will serve a definite purpose.

J. C. K.

HIS MAJESTY'S OPPOSITION

As the waters of a river are kept in their course by its banks so also the government of a country has to be directed by forces which lie outside the official sector of the government. Great Britain prides itself on possessing the "Mother of Parliaments". The method prevailing there is to maintain at Government cost "His Majesty's Opposition" to keep the Ministers within bounds by directing the flood-light of public criticism on the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government. The British Parliament is a veritable arena, where many a mortal combat between political knights take place. The discomfitted knight yields place to the victor. The occupants of the Opposition Benches today may be the proud occupants of the Treasury Benches tomorrow according to the fortunes of Parliamentary debate. This is the function of the Opposition in the British Parliamentary system. It is an outcome of the competitive economy projected into the political sphere.

The composition of the Cabinet itself reflects the structure of imperialism in the economic field. Centralized industries need to gather the raw materials from the four corners of the world and send back their finished products to markets in the outermost parts of the globe. This necessitates widespread use of money and transport and control of political power. To achieve this Foreign Affairs, Finance and Army, Navy and Air Force become essentials. Hence these have secured coveted status in the British Cabinet.

Both competition and Imperialism have their roots in violence.

Our country has taken up the reins of Government. If we desire to pursue non-violence, what shall be the form of our Government? Our Government also will need a corrective force to perform the functions of an "Opposition". But we want an economy based on co-operation and not on competition. The "Opposition" members in our economy will not be looking forward to occupying the Treasury Benches one day, should the fortunes of debate go against those in the saddle at the time. Personal ambition can have no place in an economy of non-violence and co-operation. What we should aim at is not to replace the ministers, but to hold up models that they should follow. The constructive workers should direct them into proper channels by the beacon light of their example. This is a great responsibility that would devolve upon the constructive workers in a non-violent economy.

A well-organized body of constructive workers will be needed to provide this directive force. Their service to the people will be their sanction and the merit of their work will be their charter. The ministers will draw their inspiration from such a body which will advise and guide the secular Governments.

To be able to discharge this function the constructive workers forming such a body will have to be drawn from men of renunciation, whose one aim and ambition is the service of the people.

In such a political make-up the Cabinet will handle portfolios that will be essential to an economy of self-sufficiency. The major portfolios will be Agriculture, Land Development — anti-erosion, reclamation, fertilization — Irrigation, River Controls, Forests, Village and Cottage Industries, Minerals and Heavy Industries, Health, Education and Home Affairs. It is not imperative in such a set-up to give Foreign Affairs, Finance and Defence Cabinet rank, however important these departments may be.

In a political structure of this nature the body of constructive workers will form the bulwark of safety for the people against exploitation. A Government run on this basis will give the needed emphasis to the affairs of the people and ensure their welfare, bringing in Swaraj to the masses.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

[This is very attractive. But it has to be confessed that we have not the requisite number of selfless workers capable of giving a good account of themselves.

New Delhi, 24-1-'48 —M. K. G.]

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

Birla House, New Delhi, 20-1-'48

Electricity having failed, the loud-speaker was not working. Gandhiji addressed the meeting in a feeble voice and at the end of it Dr. Sushila Nayyar repeated the substance of his speech to the audience from her notes.

A PLEA FOR SANITY

Gandhiji said that Delhi had done a great thing and he hoped that the signatories to the Peace Pledge had given their signature with God in the form of Truth as their witness. He had heard that there was a repudiation of the pledge on behalf of an official of the Hindu Mahasabha. He was sorry. If the inhabitants of Delhi and the refugees in the capital would remain steadfast and not be swayed by happenings elsewhere, they would save India and also Pakistan. Delhi was an ancient city. If Delhi acted truthfully and non-violently, the effects of its action would be felt all the world over. If they would carefully read the Sardar's speech at Bombay, they would realize that there was no difference of outlook between the Sardar, Panditji and himself. They were all working for the same end although they might express it differently. None of them was the enemy of the Mussalmans. Enmity towards the Muslims amounted to enmity towards India. The least he expected them to do was not to take the law into their own hands and commit inhuman acts. That would mean the end of society. They were bound as respectable citizens to leave justice in the hands of their chosen Government. They and their newspapers were never tired of condemning in unmeasured terms the acts of those Americans as barbarous who lynched Negroes. Did similar acts on their part become less barbarous?

Gandhiji next referred to his statement that he might now proceed to Pakistan. But that, he said, could only happen if the Pakistan Government were convinced that he (Gandhiji) was a man of peace and a friend of the Muslims and would, therefore, like him to go to Pakistan. He would, however, in any case, have to wait till the doctors declared him fit to undertake the journey. They had said that the convalescence would take at least a fortnight and it would be some time before he could take solid food. The liquids that he was now taking included fruit juice, vegetable soup and goat's milk and this was enough in all conscience.

PRIME MINISTER'S NOBLE GESTURE

Referring to the sufferings of the Hindu and Sikh refugees Gandhiji said that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was doing all that was possible in order to bring them speedy relief. His heart bled for them. He was a man who would offer his own bedding to one in distress and pace up and down the whole night in order to keep himself warm. His house was full. Being the Prime Minister of India he had to accommodate guests, both Indians and foreigners. Still he had expressed a wish to offer one or two rooms in his house to lodge refugees. He expected other Ministers, officials and men of means to do likewise. He (Gandhiji) was convinced that this act of self-sacrifice on the part of India's foremost leader would be appreciated all the world over and put a speedy end to the sufferings of the homeless refugees. It should gladden their hearts to note that this beautiful land of theirs had produced such great men, endowed with such a wonderful spirit of service and self-sacrifice. Jawahar was a real *jawahar* (gem) and there were others, only not so lustrous perhaps. If their leaders were doing all this for the people, it behoved them not to hurt their Muslim brethren. To hurt them was to hurt their leaders.

Gandhiji then went on to say that there were opportunists too in India. Some such men had endeavoured, he was told, to make money out of his fast. They produced notes which they could sell to the credulous poor. He severely criticized the practice and asked the authors of such mean action to find some honourable means of earning money. At the same time he warned the public against the tactics of such unprincipled men.

THE KASHMIR ISSUE

Gandhiji referred then to a telegram that he had received from Lahore. The sender had signed himself as President, Kashmir Freedom League and had written as follows:

> "Highly appreciate your magnanimous gesture for Hindu-Muslim unity. Kashmir is the root cause of the present tension and a stumbling block in way of any reapproachment. Must receive top priority if peace actually desired. Withdrawal of aggressive Indian troops from Kashmir and handing it over to whomever it rightfully belongs is the only satisfactory solution of the problem."

It hurt him. If the Kashmir issue was not settled, would the Muslims continue to look upon the Hindus and Sikhs as their enemies and vice versa? The army of the Indian Union had not entered Kashmir on their own. So far as he was aware, they had gone there at the call of the ruler of the State and the leader of the Kashmiri Muslims, Sheikh Abdulla. If the invaders, tribesmen and others would withdraw and the issue was left to the rebels in Poonch and the rest of Kashmir, and did not secure any aid from outside, it would be time to ask the Indian Union to withdraw its troops. The suggestion that Kashmir should go to whomsoever it rightfully belonged was perfectly true. And who were the rightful owners of Kashmir? The Maharaja was there and the Indian Government could not ignore him. Ultimately it was for the people of Kashmir to decide their own fate. Hence the idea of referendum.

GWALIOR, BHAVNAGAR AND THE KATHIAWAD STATES

Next Gandhiji read out a telegram that some Gwalior Muslim had sent to him from Ratlam. It said:

> "We Muslims inhabitants Jahangirpur, District Ujjain, Gwalior request your honour that on 15th and 16th instant our village was surrounded by Hindu party who beat us seriously. Several injured, one died. Our crops and houses destroyed. Officer of State not taking any action. We are in danger. Kindly arrange urgently."

If the report was correct, it was a matter of sorrow for them. All breach of communal peace in any corner of India should make them and their Government hang their heads in shame.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to the newspaper report that the princes of Kathiawad had decided to become in effect one State. He congratulated them on this very

wise step, and also congratulated the ruler of Bhavnagar, who had given the lead by introducing full responsible Government in his State and placing himself at the people's disposal as their first servant.

Birla House, New Delhi, 21-1-'48

BOMB AT THE PRAYER

Speaking after prayers on Wednesday evening, Gandhiji referred to the previous day's bomb explosion in the Birla House compound. He had been receiving anxious enquiries and praise for being unruffled at the accident. He thought that it was military practice and, therefore, nothing to worry about. He had not realized till after the prayers that it was a bomb explosion and that the bomb was meant against him. God only knew how he would have behaved in front of a bomb aimed at him and exploding. Therefore, he deserved no praise. He would deserve a certificate only if he fell as a result of such an explosion and yet retained a smile on his face and no malice against the doer. What he wanted to say was that no one should look down upon the misguided youth who had thrown the bomb. He probably looked upon Gandhiji as an enemy of Hinduism. After all, had not the *Gita* said that whenever there was an evil-minded person damaging religion, God sent some one to put an end to his life? That celebrated verse had a special meaning. The youth should realize that those who differed from him were not necessarily evil. The evil had no life apart from the toleration of good people. No one should believe that he or she was so perfect that he or she was sent by God to punish evil-doers, as the accused seemed to flatter himself he was.

He (Gandhiji) had heard that the youth had without permission occupied a *masjid* for lack of other accommodation and now that the police were getting all mosques evacuated, he resented the act. It was a wrong thing on his part to have occupied the *masjid* in the first place and it was doubly wrong to defy the authorities, who asked him to vacate it.

ILL SERVING HINDUISM

To those who were at the back of the youth, he would appeal to desist from such activity. That was not the way to save Hinduism. Hinduism could be saved only by Gandhiji's method. Gandhiji had practised Hinduism from early childhood. His nurse had taught him to invoke Rama when he feared evil spirits. Later on he had come in contact with Christians, Muslims and others and, after making a fair study of other religions, had stuck to Hinduism. He was as firm in his faith today as in his early childhood. He believed God would make him an instrument of saving the religion that he loved, cherished and practised. In any case, one had to have constant practice and acquaintance with the fundamentals of religion before being qualified for becoming God's instrument.

PITY THE BOMB THROWER

Continuing Gandhiji said that some Sikh friends came and said that he (Gandhiji) should not think that the Sikhs had anything to do with the deed. He knew that the youth was not a Sikh. But what did it matter whether he was a Sikh or a Hindu or a Muslim? He wished well to all perpetrators. He had told the Inspector General of Police also, not to harass him in any way. They should try to win him over and convert him to right thinking and doing. He hoped that the youth and his guides would realize their error. For, it was a wrong done to Hinduism and the country. At the same time Gandhiji warned his hearers against being angry with the accused. He did not know that he was doing anything wrong. They should pity him. If they harboured resentment against Gandhiji's fast and had still pledged themselves to maintain peace in order to save an old servant of the nation, the guilt was theirs, not that of the young man who had thrown the bomb. If, on the other hand, they had signed the Peace Pledge whole-heartedly, persons like the young man were ultimately bound to come to their way of thinking.

Gandhiji said that he expected the audience to go on with the prayers in spite of bomb explosions or a shower of bullets. He was glad to learn that a poor unlettered woman was the cause of the arrest of the miscreant. If the heart was sound, if there was right thought, lack of letters was not of any consequence. He congratulated the unlettered sister on her simple bravery.

BAHAWALPUR AND SIND

Next he referred to a note from the Bahawalpur sufferers. He had not forgotten them. Even that very day he had received a telegram from the Nawabsaheb of Bahawalpur saying that he was doing everything possible for the welfare of the non-Muslims in his State. He (Gandhiji) was pursuing the matter in his own way.

Gandhiji narrated a telegram that he had received from the Sindhi Sikh refugees at Bombay. They said that 15,000 Sikhs scattered about in Sind were in danger of extermination. Their life, religion and culture were in danger. Arrangements should be made for their speedy evacuation. Gandhiji could never tolerate the extermination of the Sikhs and would do for them all that was possible for one man to do. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Government was also fully alive to their responsibility. He called upon the Sind Government and the Pakistan Government to reassure the Sikh residents there that they would protect them with their own lives. If they could not guarantee their protection, they should gather them in one place and make arrangements for their speedy and safe evacuation. The Sikhs were a brave community. They should know that everyone's honour and religion were safe only in one's own hands. No one else could rob one of these. Parsi friends of his had gone to Sind that day.

A MISLEADING ANALOGY

Gandhiji then referred to a letter written to him during his fast. The writer had said that while Gandhiji was in jail in 1942, the country had somewhat taken to violence. If Gandhiji died of the fast, there would be such a violent upsurge in the country that it would stagger humanity. Therefore, the writer had argued that for the sake of humanity he should give up his fast. Gandhiji said that while it was true that the people had resorted to violence when he was locked up in jail, he did not think that his death under a fast should have the feared result. But he had rehearsed before embarking on the fast the possibility

of a wide fratricide. The Yadavas had destroyed each other before Lord Krishna's death. But he (Gandhiji) was too insignificant a mortal, to produce such an effect. However, if the people had become indolent and vicious like the Yadavas and God saw that there was no way out but extermination, he might make even an ordinary person like him, the instrument of such a catastrophe. Having left himself in God's hands, he worried no more about the consequences. What, however, he saw during the fast nerved him to hope that India had no such self-destruction in store for her.

Lastly, he expressed satisfaction at the way the Muslims were freely moving about in Delhi. He wanted them to continue the process of self-purification and convert their hearts into temples of the living God of Truth.

Birla House, New Delhi, 22-1-'48

For the first time after the fast Gandhiji was able to walk to the prayer ground this evening. He said in his post-prayer speech that he was slowly gaining strength and God willing hoped to return to his normal health before long.

PANDIT NEHRU'S EXAMPLE

Gandhiji then went on to say that a friend had written to him that although Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other Ministers and the officials might lodge some refugees in their houses, that would not even touch the fringe of the refugee problem. Gandhiji agreed that the Ministers and the officials together could not house more than a few thousands at the most. The virtue of the offer consisted not in the number so to be accommodated but in the fact that the example of the leaders doing the act was proving infectious. The British people appreciated the least act of self-denial on the part of the king for the sake of the people. All civilized people would appreciate and value such acts of leaders of men. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had set an example before the whole country. That this was so was proved from the fact that more refugees were being attracted to Delhi. They felt evidently that they would be best treated in Delhi. While it was proof of the popularity of Panditji's example, it was proof also that we had not learnt the art of self-restraint.

POVERTY NO SHAME

The second difficulty to which his attention was drawn was that while the Congress had been in the wilderness it had set before the people the ideal of service, self-denial and simplicity. In those days it was difficult to collect even a lakh of rupees. Today, the Congress Government was in charge of crores of rupees and could raise as much as it liked. Were they to spend it as if there was no change from foreign rule to indigenous rule? Some people seemed to think that India's leaders and ambassadors must live and spend money in a style befitting their independent status and vie with independent America and England in stylishness. They thought that such expenditure was necessary in order to uphold India's prestige in foreign countries. Gandhiji did not think so. Independence was not synonymous with stylishness or pomp. We had not cut our cloak according to our cloth. There was no merit in hiding our poverty. India's status in the world depended upon her moral supremacy which her passive resistance had brought her. In this she had no rival as yet, for the other nations, great or small, were proud of their armaments and military valour. That was their capital. India possessed only her moral capital, which increased with the spending. On any other condition the Congress claim to revolutionize values, when they came into power, would be forfeited. People criticized the Ministers for accepting high salaries and not bringing the artificial British standard down to the natural Indian standard. These critics knew nothing of the private life of their Ministers. But the fashion was for Congressmen and others to expect high emoluments wholly out of keeping with what one was making out of office. One who managed to live on Rs. 150 per month would not hesitate to demand and expect Rs. 500. Such persons felt that they would not be appreciated unless they demanded high salaries and lived in the old Civil Service style and dressed up as such. That was not the way to serve India. They should not forget that a man's value did not depend upon the amount of money that he earned. The process of self-purification, which they all must share, demanded right thought and action.

GWALIOR AGAIN

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to Gwalior. He had already mentioned a telegram enumerating the sufferings of the Muslims in a village in that State. However, a Praja Mandal representative came to see him the evening before after the prayer meeting and asked for his blessings on the act of the Maharaja giving full Responsible Government to the people. Gandhiji said that he was not interested in political reforms in the State if there was to be any distinction of caste, creed or community. Both the Maharaja and the people would deserve his congratulations and blessings only if they did away with all such distinctions, and if there was not the least dislike towards the Muslims and the *bhangi* and the brahmin and the rich and the poor had equality of treatment in law and in fact. If the Maharajasaheb would be the first servant of the people, he would welcome him and his successors to continue to occupy the *gadi* and keep on serving the people. The rulers and the ruled had all to undergo self-purification. That was the only way for India to stand erect before the world and be the custodian of its moral height.

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-1-'48

NETAJI'S BIRTHDAY

Today being the anniversary of Subhashbabu's birthday Gandhiji referred to it in his post-prayer speech. He said that he generally did not remember such dates, nor did he attach much value to dates of birth and death. He did not know whether it was right or wrong for him to be so indifferent. But he was just reminded of the day and he was glad that there was special reason to take note of Subhashbabu's birthday in spite of the fact that the deceased patriot had believed in violence, while he (Gandhiji) believed in non-violence. But he would not forget at this time that it was Subhashbabu who knew no provincialism nor communal differences. He had in his brave army men and women drawn from all over India without distinction and evoked affection and loyalty which very few have been able to evoke. A lawyer friend asked him for a good

definition of Hinduism. Though he was a *sanatani* Hindu, he was unable to define Hinduism. Gandhiji replied that he had forgotten his law for years. Nor was he learned in the science of religion. But as a lay man he could say that Hinduism regarded all religions as worthy of all respect. Subhashbabu was, in his opinion, such a Hindu. In memory of that great patriot, they should cleanse their hearts of all communal bitterness.

A PLEA FOR CAUTION

Proceeding Gandhiji referred to what he had said about communal trouble in a Gwalior village. He had been investigating the matter and had just received a telegram from one who had personally visited the village in question, saying that the information conveyed to him regarding looting, arson and killing of the Muslims in the village of Jahangirpur was quite wrong. It was true that there was a personal private quarrel which could not be stretched into a communal question. And in no case was there arson or loss of life. Gandhiji said that the telegram gladdened him. He advised his Muslim friends to be most careful about sending complaints. They should meticulously avoid all exaggeration. The golden rule in life was to exaggerate one's own faults and belittle those of others. That was the only way to self-purification. Those who indulged in exaggeration would discredit their community.

MYSORE, JUNAGADH AND MEERUT

Gandhiji then mentioned a telegram from Mysore saying that there had been communal trouble there and that his fast had not produced any effect in Mysore. He (Gandhiji) was sorry to hear this. He advised the Mysore Government to issue a clear statement on the actual happenings.

Gandhiji next referred to a telegram by several influential Muslims of Junagadh. They said that since the Sardar had appointed a Regional Commissioner there, they felt fully reassured. No one would now be able to create a split amongst the people of Junagadh and at the referendum they would be able to prove that the Muslims of Junagadh were with the rest of the people.

Gandhiji had also received a telegram from Meerut. It said that the efforts to keep perfect peace in the country were highly appreciated. They had no ill feelings against the Nationalist Muslims, but they did not believe that those League Muslims who, until yesterday, had been collecting arms and even now intended to help Pakistan, could ever be loyal to the Union. He (Gandhiji) would have to repent if he put his trust in them. They also said that religion and politics were quite separate and non-violence could never work in politics. They added that they were satisfied with the present Government and did not want any change in it. He (Gandhiji) did not understand how the question of change in the Government arose. He did not believe that anyone could displace or replace the present Government.

HOW TO DEAL WITH TRAITORS

It was rather late in the day to tell him that non-violence could not work in politics. In politics they could not begin with distrust. Those in charge of the Government were men of great courage and self-sacrifice. They would deal with traitors when the occasion came. Traitors might be found in any community and not only among the Muslims. They had decided to live with the Muslims as brothers and he wanted them to stick to their resolve. All Leaguers were not bad. They should report against those who indulged in questionable activities and let the Government deal with them as severely as it liked. They must on no account take the law into their own hands. That would be barbarous.

Lastly, Gandhiji again thanked those who had sent telegrams of good wishes which were still pouring in. He prayed to God that their wishes for the maintenance of peace might be fulfilled. The senders would excuse him for his inability to send personal acknowledgments.

Birla House, New Delhi, 24-1-'48

Gandhiji on arrival at the prayer ground was greeted by an unusually large gathering. The women with crying babies were chattering among themselves. Gandhiji therefore, exhorted the audience to maintain perfect quiet during the prayers and this was done for a time only. The prayer over, Gandhiji had again to call attention to the noise of the women and children and appealed for silence with some effect.

EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS — ABDUCTEES

Gandhiji then read from a letter received by him complaining that the inter-Dominion agreement for the restoration of abducted women prisoners, while it was duly honoured in the earlier stages, was not being implemented now. He was informed that the West Punjab Government had demanded as a condition precedent that the States should also fall in line. Gandhiji had no objection to such a wish, but if it was a fresh condition, it was not proper. Friendship demanded that all prisoners and women should be returned to either Dominion without regard to their number. The number of abducted women kept in the West Punjab might be larger but so long as there was one such sister in the East Punjab, it would be sinful to withhold her from her kith and kin. Why should there be a competition in wrong behaviour? Gandhiji suggested that there should be complete forgetting of the past if there was a thorough inward cleansing. He had noticed with much pain that each Dominion accused the other of bad faith. If they were to give a good account of themselves, this thing had to stop.

At this stage the chatter had become so great that Gandhiji said that he could not proceed with what he wanted to say. He, therefore, brought the meeting to a close and in doing so again stressed the importance of women observing complete silence at the prayers and that those with children should stand at the fringe in order that silence might not be broken.

Birla House, New Delhi, 25-1-'48

The gathering at Gandhiji's public prayer which has been growing bigger and bigger for the last two days reached unusual dimensions today owing to its being Sunday. Gandhiji began his address after the prayer by suggesting that the audience should try in future to bring with them an *asana* made of straw or the thickest *khaddar*, as it was not advisable for them to sit on bare damp ground.

ALL QUIET IN DELHI

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that assurances were daily pouring in that all was well with Delhi and that there was nothing to worry so far as the communal

situation in the city was concerned. It gladdened his heart to be told by his Hindu and Muslim friends that a reunion of hearts was in the course of being established and that the people were waking up to the truth that it would not be possible for them to pursue their normal avocation if they continued quarrelling among themselves. Having regard to the improved situation he suggested that they might go a step further and that each Hindu and Sikh should make it a point to bring with him at least one Muslim to the prayer gathering.

URS AT MEHRAULI

Gandhiji next referred to the annual celebration of the *urs* at Bakhtiar Chishti's *dargah* at Mehrauli which was to commence from the next day. During the riots the *dargah* had been damaged by miscreants and some of the stone lattice work was removed. Efforts had been made during the last few days to effect the repairs so far as it was possible. Previously, both Mussalmans and Hindus used to visit it and take part in the *urs*. If the Hindus could still go there in the same spirit of peace and devotion, it would be a great thing. He hoped that such Muslims as might want to take part in it would be assured the completest security and safety from insult or molestation and that too with the minimum assistance of the police. He would rather that they should all constitute themselves into police for the purpose. The eyes of the whole world were on them, continued Gandhiji. Telegrams were pouring in from all quarters of the globe — from China, from Africa, from Europe and from America expressing deep appreciation and admiration of what they had done in Delhi. He hoped that they would all so act as to come up to the expectations that had been aroused. The transfer of power on the 15th of August as a result of their passive resistance struggle was a unique event in the history of the world. But then they fell from grace and the Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs behaved towards one another like barbarians. It was, however, he hoped, only a temporary distemper. Their hearts were sound. The fast seemed to have served to throw out the distemper. He hoped that the cure would be permanent, without the possibility of a relapse.

"SET ME FREE"

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that he hoped that they would now set him free to go to Wardha. He would be going there to do their work. Dr. Rajendra Prasad too would be going there. But he could go only with their blessings coupled with the solemn guarantee that things would be well during his absence. He wanted to go to Pakistan too. But since legally Pakistan was now foreign territory, he could go there only with the permission and consent, if not the invitation, of the Pakistan Government.

LINGUISTIC REDISTRIBUTION OF PROVINCES

Continuing Gandhiji referred next to the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee, which had been sitting for the last two days. Gandhiji said that they had been discussing the question of re-constitution of provinces on a linguistic basis. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were both present in that day's meeting. The Congress had already adopted that principle and had declared its intention to give effect to it constitutionally as soon as they came to power, as such re-distribution would be conducive to the cultural advancement of the country. But such re-distribution should not militate against the organic unity of India. Autonomy did not and should not mean disruption or that hereafter provinces could go the way they chose, independent of one another and of the Centre. If each province began to look upon itself as a separate, sovereign unit, India's independence would lose its meaning and with it would vanish the freedom of the various units as well.

The charter of India's independence as conceived by the Congress was based on village autonomy. But all the villages were to derive vitality from the Centre, as the latter in its turn derived all power and authority from the former. It would be fatal if it led to narrow provincialism, mutual bickerings and rivalries — between Tamil and Andhra for instance, Bombay and Karnatak and so on. The re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis was necessary if provincial languages were to grow to their full height. Hindustani was to be the lingua franca — *Rashtra Bhasha* — of India, but it could not take the place of the provincial tongues. It could not be the medium of instruction in the provinces — much less English. Its function was to make them realize their organic relationship with India. The world outside did not know them as Gujaratis, Maharashtris, Tamilians etc., but only as Indians. We must, therefore, resolutely discourage all fissiparous tendencies and feel and behave as Indians. Subject to this paramount consideration, a linguistic re-distribution of provinces should give an impetus to education and trade.

NO BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Gandhiji hoped that they would not need a Boundary Commission to delimit the frontiers on the new basis. That was the foreign way which they had discarded. The best thing would be for themselves to determine the boundaries on the new basis by mutual agreement and consent and place the same before their Prime Minister for his final sanction. That would be true independence. To go to a third party in the shape of a Boundary Commission for a settlement would be a negation of independence. They must evolve inter-dependence and mutual help.

Birla House, New Delhi, 26-1-'48

INDEPENDENCE DAY

This day, 26th January, is Independence Day. This observance was quite appropriate when we were fighting for Independence we had not seen nor handled. Now! We have handled it and we seem to be disillusioned. At least I am, even if you are not.

What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment. We are entitled to celebrate the hope that the worst is over and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest of the villager that it means his freedom from serfdom and that he is no longer a serf born to serve the cities and towns of India but that he is destined to exploit the city dwellers for the advertisement of the finished fruits of well thought out labours, that he is the salt of the Indian earth, that it means also equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major

community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in number or influence. Let us not defer the hope and make the heart sick. Yet what are the strikes and a variety of lawlessness but a deferring of the hope? These are symptoms of our sickness and weakness. Let labour realize its dignity and strength. Capital has neither dignity nor strength compared to labour. These the man in the street also has. In a well-ordered democratic society there is no room, no occasion for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society there are ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence, veiled or unveiled must be taboo. Strikes in Cawnpore, coal mines or elsewhere mean material loss to the whole society not excluding the strikers themselves. I need not be reminded that this declamation does not lie well in the mouth of one like me who has been responsible for so many successful strikes. If there be such critics they ought not to forget that then there was neither independence nor the kind of legislation we have now. I wonder if we can remain free from the fever of power politics or the bid for power which afflicts the political world, the East and the West. Before leaving this topic of the day, let us permit ourselves to hope that though geographically and politically India is divided into two, at heart we shall ever be friends and brothers helping and respecting one another and be one for the outside world.

Decontrol and Transport

Decontrol of cloth has been welcomed in all quarters. There never was scarcity of cloth. How can there be when there is enough cotton and enough hands in the land for spinning and weaving? Equally welcome is the removal of control on firewood and coal. It is remarkable that there is now a glut in the market of *gur*, the poor man's supply for caloric deficiency. There would be no remedy of glut nor of reaching places outside the boundary of production unless there is quick locomotion. Let a correspondent in the know speak on this subject:

> "Needless to say that efficiency of the Rail and Road Transport is the chief factor for the success of the Decontrol Policy. If there is no improvement in the Railway Transport, there is danger of countrywide famine and the entire collapse of the decontrols. The present working of the Railway Transport is a living danger to these decontrols and controls alike. The terrible contrast of different prices prevalent in the different parts of India for the same commodity is chiefly due to this transport bottleneck. If *gur* is sold at Rs. 8 per maund at Rohtak and at Rs. 50 in Bombay, we must say that there is something wrong with the working of the Railways. Thousands of wagons in the length and the breadth of the country are not kept moving. Wagons are not even unloaded for months and months together. Corruption is rampant in a most virulent form in the booking of these wagons, in the garb of 'scarcity of wagons and coal' and 'priority for different commodities'. For the booking of one wagon load one has to spend hundreds of rupees and spend days together in the railway yards. Even the best efforts of the worthy Transport Member have cut no ice in so far as the supply of these wagons and their constant moving is concerned. The entire Rail and Road Transport requires a complete overhauling by the Transport Member to make the decontrols a thorough success. Then only decontrols shall prove a blessing to the poor for the benefit of whom they are being pursued. Millions of villagers, farmers and labourers are hit owing to the defective system in this Rail and Road Transport, as their produce seldom reaches in the markets.
>
> "As stated in my previous letter the rationing of petrol ought to be removed and the monopoly and the permit system of the Road Transport may be abolished altogether. This monopoly system is benefiting a few transport companies only but has rendered the lives of millions and millions of our countrymen difficult.
>
> "95 per cent of the success in decontrols solely depends upon the efficient working of the railways and vehicles, i. e. in keeping the wagons moving, and abolishing the rationing of petrol and the permit and monopoly system of the lorries. This shall bring from the remotest corners of the country lakhs of tons of foodstuffs and all other produce profusely to the entire markets of the land."

Demon of Corruption

The subject of corruption referred to by the correspondent is not new. Only it has become much worse than before. Restraint from without has practically gone. Corruption will go when the large number of persons given to the unworthy practice realize that the nation does not exist for them but that they do for the nation. It requires a high code of morals, extreme vigilance on the part of those who are free from the corrupt practice and who have influence over corrupt servants. Indifference in such matters is criminal. If our evening prayers are genuine, they must play no mean part in removing from our midst the demon of corruption.

GANDHI'S CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANITY

By *S. K. George*

With Forewords *By* *Prof. S. Radhakrishnan* and *Mr. Horace Alexander*

Price *Re. One As. Eight* : Postage etc. *As. Five*

SELF-RESTRAINT v. SELF-INDULGENCE

[Revised one volume Edition]

By Gandhiji

Price *Rs. Two* Postage *etc. As. Eight*

WOMEN AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE

[Third enlarged Edition]

By Gandhiji

Price *Rs. Three* Postage *As. Eight*

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Post Box 105
AHMEDABAD

THE SILVER LINING

An esteemed English friend in a letter to Gandhiji writes:

"You will remember that on one of your cheering visits to my sick bed recently we both felt that more should be known of the good deeds of the Muslims to non-Muslims and vice versa in the Punjab. And I promised to give a few examples from my own experience. I have been working almost entirely in the West Punjab, on behalf of the non-Muslims, so my memories are mainly of Muslim kindness, but I am sure that similar stories could be told of the generosity of individual Hindus and Sikhs on the other side.

"Perhaps the most vivid recollection is of the evacuation of Lillah, in . . . . . . District in November. As we came into the town with our Sikh drivers all the Muslims assembled and glared at us suspiciously. Suddenly an old gentleman with a long red beard came out and hugged me like a bear, and we sat down in the square and drank tea and ate biscuits. There was a sigh through the crowd. Some went home, but many stayed to help the Hindus load their heavy tin boxes, and there were tears in their eyes as we left.

"I think it was in . . . . . District that the President of a branch of the Muslim League recovered many abducted Hindu girls telling the abductors that their conduct was a disgrace to Islam. The girls were taken safely to the East Punjab Liaison Officer, and each was given five rupees by the local Muslims to make themselves tidy before they entered the camp.

"Certainly, in . . . . , the Deputy Commissioner was always accessible and friendly to non-Muslim deputations and did everything he could to improve their conditions. I was told that in his last District he had quelled single-handed a mob which tried to attack the non-Muslim camp. Another very fine Deputy Commissioner was in . . . . . So consistently did he protect the non-Muslims that I heard that several disgruntled local Muslims went to the Prime Minister of the West Punjab to have him removed as "pro-Hindu". But the Prime Minister backed him as an officer who was doing his duty.

"Even in rebel Kashmir I found Muslims who saw it as their duty to protect non-Muslims. In . . . . , ... said to me, "Islam forbids us to war on women, children and holy men. I must keep those prisoners of war who bore arms against us. We may have an opportunity of exchange. But from any of our camps or villages you may take all the Hindu and Sikh non-combatants. Or if this is not convenient, I pledge my solemn word to send them to the border." And . . . . . on the border promised to feed and care for them even without orders from his superiors. "It is my duty as a soldier and a Mussalman," he said.

"So much depends on approach. I think very few people in India know how much is owed to India's representatives in the West Punjab, and in particular to . . . . . and to . . . . for their constant tact and successful diplomacy.

"Brigadier . . . . . boldly moved his headquarters from Amritsar to Lahore as soon as he was appointed. He set up his office in the same building with the Pakistan M. E. O. and established such excellent liaison that every train and truck which crossed the border always came back with a full return load. Entirely unofficially, quite outside the inter-Governmental agreements, he arranged for Indian troops to go out into the villages along with Pakistan troops, and thus we rescued many desperate non-Muslims who were terrified to go with Muslim troops alone. I never heard a bad word from any Pakistani against Brigadier . . . . and yet he completed his evacuation programme well ahead of schedule. The only thing I ever held against him is that he used to try and persuade me to believe that the Mahrattas really captured fortresses by being drawn up the walls on the tails of lizards! And I hate having my leg pulled.

"Mr. . . . . 's approach was equally confident. He had served the Punjab Government twentyfive years. He approached the Muslim Deputy Commissioners as friends and former colleagues, and frankly asked their help in our work. Four out of five would respond in the same spirit.

"And on the non-official side I never can forget how much I learnt from Miss Mridula Sarabhai, whose fearless, completely non-communal spirit has succeeded in getting so many abducted women restored on both sides."

"Of course," he adds, "I have also seen horrible things, in both the East and the West Punjab. And I have been very peevish at being shot at by Pathans, though I am told that it is just their idea of fun."

But he is of opinion that given certain conditions and more of the spirit of confident approach, the Punjab might become safe for the minorities within a year.

New Delhi, 20-1-'48 PYARELAL

CONTENTS

		PAGE
HARIJANS AND TEMPLE ENTRY	... M. K. GANDHI	1
SACRED MOMENTS — I	... PYARELAL	2
LESSONS FROM RUSSIA	... J. C. KUMARAPPA	3
CONGRESS POSITION	... M. K. GANDHI	4
MILL CLOTH v. KHADI	... PYARELAL	4
WORTHY OF REFLECTION	... M. K. GANDHI	5
THE SEVEN POINT PLEDGE		6
REORIENTATION IN RAILWAYS	... GAJANAN NAIK	6
HIS MAJESTY'S OPPOSITION	... J. C. KUMARAPPA	9
GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES		10
THE SILVER LINING	... PYARELAL	16
NOTES:		
DECONTROL VINDICATED	... P.	8
AFTER FOOD STUFFS CLOTH	... P.	8
A NEW FAMILY MEMBER	... MIRA	8
A SUGGESTION	... J. C. K.	8
SPORT	... J. C. K.	8
IS IT TOO LATE?	... J. C. K.	9

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Kalupur, Ahmedabad.
Subscription Rates — INLAND: One year, Rs. 6: Six months, Rs. 3: FOREIGN: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 sh. or. $ 3.